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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MEPN](#) [KPAL](#) [EG](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: ARAB LEAGUE DENOUNCES ISRAELI MUGHRABI GATE,
TEMPLE MOUNT ACTIONS

THIS MESSAGE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE TREAT
ACCORDINGLY.

1. (SBU) ARAB LEAGUE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES MET IN CAIRO ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, TO DISCUSS THE WEEKEND VIOLENCE IN JERUSALEM, TOUCHED OFF BY ISRAELI CONSTRUCTION AT THE MUGHRABI GATE NEAR THE TEMPLE MOUNT. SENIOR POLITICAL ADVISOR TO PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, NABIL SHAATH, JOINED FOR THE EMERGENCY SESSION. AFTER THE MEETING, DELEGATES ISSUED A STATEMENT TITLED "ISRAELI PROCEDURES AGAINST THE AQSA MOSQUE" (TEXT BELOW AT PARAGRAPH THREE) WHICH CALLED FOR FOLLOW-UP AT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL AND UNESCO. ALONG WITH A DENUNCIATION OF ISRAELI ACTIONS, THE STATEMENT ANNOUNCED PLANS TO ISSUE AN ARAB POSTAL STAMP WHOSE REVENUES WILL BE DONATED TO SUPPORT THE "STEADFASTNESS OF JERUSALEM AND ITS PEOPLE." EGYPT'S DELEGATE TO THE LEAGUE TOLD LOCAL MEDIA THAT ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS WOULD PURSUE THE ISSUE OF ISRAELI ACTIONS NEAR THE TEMPLE MOUNT AND AQSA MOSQUE DURING THEIR REGULARLY SCHEDULED MINISTERIAL IN CAIRO ON MARCH 3-4, TO PREPARE FOR A MARCH 28-29 ARAB SUMMIT IN RIYADH.

2. (SBU) MEANWHILE, EGYPT'S MFA WAS ALSO QUICK TO POUNCE ON THE ISSUE, CONVOKING ISRAELI AMBASSADOR SHALOM COHEN ON FEBRUARY 8 TO CONVEY EGYPT'S "RESENTMENT AND ANGER OVER THE EXCAVATIONS AND DEMOLITIONS ISRAEL IS CARRYING OUT NEAR THE AL AQSA MOSQUE." THE MFA WAS EQUALLY QUICK TO ISSUE A PUBIC STATEMENT FOLLOWING THE MEETING BETWEEN COHEN AND MFA CHEF DU CABINET WAFAA BASSIM, STRESSING EGYPT'S CONCERN THAT "SUCH ACTIONS (BY ISRAEL IN JERUSALEM) SUBVERT THE EFFORTS CURRENTLY EXERTED TO REBUILD CONFIDENCE BETWEEN THE PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI SIDES."

3. (U) TEXT OF FEBRUARY 10 ARAB LEAGUE STATEMENT ON AQSA MOSQUE, MUGHRABI GATE ISSUE

BEGIN TEXT (UNOFFICIAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION):

STATEMENT ON ISRAELI PROCEDURES AGAINST AQSA MOSQUE AND
TAKING A UNIFIED ARAB STAND AGAINST THAT AGGRESSION

THE AL COUNCIL, AT THE LEVEL OF PERMANENT DELEGATES, HELD AN EMERGENCY MEETING ON FEBRUARY 10, 2007, UPON THE REQUEST OF THE PALESTINIAN DELEGATE, AND CHAIRED BY AMBASSADOR KHALIL AL-ZAWAWY OF BAHRAIN. THE MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY ARAB LEAGUE SECRETARY GENERAL MOUSSA AND NABIL SHA'ATH, AS REPRESENTATIVE OF MAHMOUD ABBAS, TO DISCUSS THE AGGRESSIVE ISRAELI PROCEDURES BEING TAKEN AGAINST THE ISLAMIC HOLY SITES IN JERUSALEM, THE SERIOUSNESS OF EFFORTS BY THE OCCUPYING FORCES TO DIG BENEATH AND AROUND THE AL AQSA MOSQUE, AND THE DEMOLITION OF THE MUGHRABI GATE NEXT TO THE WESTERN WALL OF THE MOSQUE.

THE COUNCIL CONDEMNED THESE CRIMINAL AND DESTRUCTIVE ACTS BY THE ISRAELI OCCUPYING AUTHORITIES AGAINST THE AL AQSA MOSQUE

WHICH THREATEN (IT) WITH COLLAPSE, AND ASSERTED THAT ANY ENCROACHMENT ON THE (AQSA) MOSQUE IS AN ENCROACHMENT UPON THE ISLAMIC RELIGION WORLD-WIDE. THE COUNCIL WARNED AGAINST CONTINUING ISRAELI AGGRESSION ON ISLAMIC HOLY SITES IN JERUSALEM AND AGAINST THE VIGOROUS VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY RELATED TO JERUSALEM AND ITS MILITARY OCCUPATION.

THE COUNCIL PRAISED THE STEADFASTNESS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND ESPECIALLY THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM IN FACING THE OCCUPYING AUTHORITIES TO PROTECT THE AL AQSA MOSQUE.

THE COUNCIL CALLED FOR A NUMBER OF STEPS (AT THE ARAB, ISLAMIC, AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS) TO BE TAKEN TO HALT ISRAEL'S AGGRESSION ON THE AQSA MOSQUE AND OTHER ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN HOLY SITES IN JERUSALEM, ASSERTING THE FOLLOWING:

- ASSERTING THE ARAB CHARACTER OF JERUSALEM AND THE ILLEGALITY OF ISRAELI PROCEDURES AIMED AT CONTROLLING IT AND CHANGING ITS GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC NATURE; CONDEMNING ISRAELI AGGRESSION ON AL-AQSA MOSQUE AND ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN HOLY SITES IN THE CITY, ADHERING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE ON ALL PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES OCCUPIED AFTER 1967 WITH JERUSALEM AS ITS CAPITAL. THE COUNCIL ALSO CONDEMNS ALL ISRAELI PROGRAMS AND PLANS - OFFICIAL AND NONOFFICIAL - WHICH AIM TO ENFORCE ITS OCCUPATION AND TAKING OF JERUSALEM.

- URGED THE ARAB GROUP AT THE UNITED NATIONS TO REQUEST A SECURITY COUNCIL EMERGENCY SESSION, AND THE SHOULDERING OF THE UNSC'S RESPONSIBILITY TO HALT SUCH SERIOUS VIOLATIONS AGAINST THE AL AQSA MOSQUE, WHICH VIOLATE THE FOURTH GENEVA AGREEMENT OF 1949 AND RELATED PROTOCOLS AND ALSO CONTRADICTS THE HAGUE AGREEMENT OF 1954 WHICH REJECTS AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS TAKEN AGAINST ANY PLACE OF WORSHIP, IN ADDITION TO CALLING FOR AN END TO PLANS BY THE ISRAELI OCCUPYING AUTHORITIES TO

EXTEND JEWISH CONTROL OVER SUCH PLACES.

- URGED THE ARAB GROUP AT UNESCO TO CALL FOR AN EMERGENCY MEETING TO REVIEW THE SERIOUS VIOLATIONS TO A MAJOR FEATURE OF HUMAN AND ISLAMIC HISTORY IN JERUSALEM.

- CALLED UPON THE TRANSITIONAL ARAB PARLIAMENT AND ARAB PARLIAMENTARIAN FEDERATION COUNCIL TO CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTS TO CONSULT AND COORDINATE WITH THE AL SECRETARY GENERAL TO TAKE NECESSARY PROCEDURES IN REGARDS TO THIS MATTER.

- CALLED UPON WESTERN AND ISLAMIC COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTINUE MATERIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT TO THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM AND PALESTINIAN ASSOCIATIONS, TO MAINTAIN THEIR STEADFASTNESS AND TO SUPPORT THEIR EFFORTS TO HALT THE CRIMINAL ACTS OF ISRAEL'S OCCUPYING FORCES AGAINST THE AQSA MOSQUE AND ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN HOLY SITES.

- CALLED UPON THE MEMBERS OF THE QUARTET TO SHOULDER THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND TO PRESSURE ISRAEL TO COMMIT TO AN IMMEDIATE HALT TO ITS AGGRESSION WHICH THREATENS ALL EFFORTS TO REVIVE THE PEACEFUL OPERATION AND ABORTS THE POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE STATUS OF JERUSALEM.

- NOTED THAT THE ARAB LEAGUE SECRETARIAT WILL COORDINATE WITH THE OIC SECRETARIAT TO ISSUE A POSTAL STAMP DEPICTING JERUSALEM, WITH REVENUES GOING TO SUPPORT THE STEADFASTNESS OF JERUSALEM AND ITS PEOPLE.

END TEXT OF STATEMENT.
RICCIARDONE